



**Town of Clayton**  
**Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 5:30 PM**  
**Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library**  
**446 E. Second Street**

**Board Members Present:**

Eugene Wheeler  
Meredith Sewell  
Amanda Gawthorpe  
Amber Revels-Stocks  
Lucy Bianchi  
Victoria Privette  
Sarah Chera  
Miriam Herrell

**Staff Present:**

Gretchen Williams, Council Member  
Mel Poole, Library Manager  
Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

**Board Members Absent:**

Julia Curran  
Jill King  
Makayla Noel Walden

Pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 143-318.10(e), these minutes provide a general summary of the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript.

**1 CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Wheeler called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) Adoption of Minutes

- July 17, 2025

*Presenter:* Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

**Adoption of Minutes**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>CARRIED 8-0</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Victoria Privette
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Amanda Gawthorpe
<b>YES:</b>	Eugene Wheeler, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Victoria Privette, Sarah Chera, and Miriam Herrell
<b>NO:</b>	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Julia Curran, Jill King, and Makayla Noel Walden

### 3 OLD BUSINESS

### 4 NEW BUSINESS

- a) Cultural Arts & Library Community Survey  
*Presenter:* Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole presented the results of the recent library survey to the board. Approximately 331 individuals responded to the survey. It was noted that there are about 10,000 library card holders, representing roughly 30% of Clayton's population.

#### **Library Usage:**

- 36% of respondents reported they never use the library.
- 37% use the library a few times a year.
- 15% use the library once to twice a month.
- 12% use the library once a week or more.
- 27% identified as regular monthly users.

Ms. Bianchi inquired whether these figures included usage of digital services such as Kanopy and other online resources. Ms. Poole clarified that the survey responses could be interpreted as the frequency of physical visits to the library building, rather than exclusive use of digital platforms like Kanopy and Libby. The survey did not specify the mode of usage.

#### **Unmet Needs Identified:**

- Cultural events for adults
- Lifelong learning and adult education classes
- Print books for adults

#### **Most Important Services to Adult Users:**

- Print books for adults
- Lifelong learning and classes for adults
- E-books and e-magazines
- Cultural events for adults

#### **Top Areas of Satisfaction:**

- Courtesy of staff
- Cleanliness and maintenance of the facility
- Knowledge of staff
- Availability of books for children

#### **Top Areas of Dissatisfaction:**

- Books for adults (13%)
- Meeting rooms (16%)
- Newspapers and magazines (16%)

Ms. Poole noted that these areas of dissatisfaction align closely with the unmet needs and priorities identified by adult users. She emphasized that the library's goal moving

forward is to enhance programming to address these needs over the next several years.

It was discussed that the library is currently maximizing the use of available space while diversifying its offerings. The team continues to monitor usage patterns and community requests to better tailor services.

Ms. Poole also shared that the upcoming library renovation will include an updated meeting room and additional meeting spaces. Furthermore, plans are underway to expand the collection of print magazines.

- b) North Carolina Public Library Survey  
*Presenter:* Mel Poole, Library Manager

It was noted that the library compiles and submits annual statistics to the State Library. These statistics are publicly available on the State Library's website. Ms. Poole explained that the data includes information such as income, revenue, expenses, capital expenditures, circulation numbers broken down by age groups, program attendance figures, and the number of resources available.

Ms. Poole shared that one way she assesses the library's needs is by reviewing this publicly available data and making comparisons to similar libraries. This allows her to evaluate factors such as operating budgets, staffing levels, and collection sizes. When any comparisons to other public libraries arise during discussions, this State Library data serves as the primary source of information.

## 5 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD

- a) *Presenter:* Eugene Wheeler, Board Vice-Chair

Mr. Wheeler opened the floor for questions, observations, and suggestions.

A question was raised regarding the impact of the current absence of a State Budget on the library's funding. Ms. Poole responded that, as of now, there has been no reduction in State Aid. Programs such as Cardinal and NC Kids Digital Library have not been affected to date. It was shared that discussions are ongoing with Cardinal, which has requested State funding due to the potential loss of Federal funding; however, the request for State funding was denied. Ms. Poole added that lobbyists are advocating on behalf of the library system and that funding is still being received, with no indication at this time that it will cease.

Mr. Wheeler shared that, in recent conversations with Ms. Curran, the topic of potentially rejoining the Johnston County Library system was discussed. He provided a brief background, noting that Clayton was formerly part of the Johnston County Library system.

Ms. Andruzzi responded with additional context, explaining that Clayton chose to withdraw from the county system due to a reported imbalance in funding distribution. It was noted that the majority of funds were directed toward the Smithfield Library, while libraries in Selma, Clayton, and other areas reportedly received minimal support.

Additionally, there were concerns about limited access to inter-library loan materials. After withdrawing, Clayton gained improved access to grants and other sources of public funding.

It was also mentioned that Halloween costumes are still available.

## 6 UPDATE ON FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- a) *Presenter:* Ellen Andruzzi, Friends of the Library President

It was shared that the Friends of the Library will participate in the upcoming Night Market next Friday. They will have children's books, adult books, and vinyl records available at their booth.

Ms. Andruzzi noted that the Friends of the Library will also be present at the Harvest Festival on Saturday, October 25, 2025.

Ms. Poole added that the library's booth at the Harvest Festival will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Setup will begin at 9:00 a.m., with breakdown starting around 5:00 p.m.

## 7 LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

- a) Librarian's Report  
*Presenter:* Mel Poole, Library Manager

It was shared that the youth programs will resume in October after the pause in September. Due to limited space, all programs held will be offered through registration only. To begin, there will only be four youth programs per month, the goal is to reach different age groups for each of those programs.

Ms. Poole shared for the third year; the library is offering the Halloween Costume Swap. During September and October, patrons would be able to donate and swap gently used costumes.

It was mentioned that through October 18, they would be accepting submissions for a Spooky Story Contest. This contest would be open to kids in grades 3-8 and the theme is "The Library After Dark." Submissions are being accepted in person and online.

Ms. Poole shared that the National Friends of the Library Week is October 19-25. She thanked the Friends of the Library for sponsoring programs and services such as StoryWalk®, Summer Reading Program, and All Hallows Read.

The following upcoming programs were shared:

- 9/29/2025 at 2:00pm: Photo Voter ID with Johnston County Board of Elections
- 10/6/2025 at 6:00pm: Glowing Art! Nature's Bioluminescence (K-2nd Grades)
- 10/21/2025 at 5:30pm: Teen Time - Spooky Sketchbooks (6th-12th Grades)
- 10/30/2025 at 4:00pm: All Hallows Read (K-5th Grades)

### **July 2025**

Visits: 1,894; New Patrons: 217; Physical Checkouts: 8,260; Digital Checkouts: 3,579; Public Computer Sessions: 208; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 5/130; Children Program/Attendance: 6/226; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/12; Adult Program/Attendance: 7/79; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 0/0

### **August 2025**

Visits: 1,737; New Patrons: 195; Physical Checkouts: 10,554; Digital Checkouts: 3,445; Public Computer Sessions: 248; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 4/139; Children Program/Attendance: 7/98; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/12; Adult Program/Attendance: 7/102; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 0/0

### **Outreach Events**

- Downtown Concert (July and August)
- Ghost Walk hosted by CHA (October date TBA)

### **Popular Check Outs**

- Great Big Beautiful Life - Emily Henry
- 25 Alive: (Women's Murder Club 25) - James Patterson and Maxine Paetro
- The Glass Maker - Tracy Chevalier
- Dog Man: Grime And Punishment - Dav Pilkey
- Dog Man: Brawl of the Wild - Dav Pilkey
- The Tenant - Freida McFadden

### **Color Our World Summer Reading 2025**

- 507 Participants
- 189 Children Ages 0-6
- 166 Children Ages 7-12
- 24 Teens
- 128 Adults
- 75 % Children/Teens
- 25 Adults

### **Challenge Completed**

Percentage of enrolled participants who completed the challenge:

- 28% Pre-Readers
- 46% Children
- 33% Teens
- 17% Adults
  
- 160 Total Completed Challenges By All Participants - 32%

Number Of Completed Challenged By Age Group:

- 53 Children 0-6
- 77 Children 7-12

- 8 Teens
- 22 Adults

133 Super Readers (read 2x challenge requirements or more)

- 43 Children 0-6
- 68 Children 7-12
- 7 Teens
- 13 Adults

137,942 Minutes Logged (14,858 more minutes logged than last summer, but with 360 fewer participants)

- 0-6 Years Old: 30,948
- 7-12 Years Old: 75,902
- 13-17 Years Old: 14, 540

Ms. Poole provided an overview of the Summer Reading Program. A total of 352 adult books were logged during the program period. The library recorded 2,853 visitors, 13,981 physical item circulations, and 4,189 digital circulations. Additionally, 343 new library cards were issued, and patrons submitted 9,547 entries for the virtual raffle.

In conclusion, a total of 34 programs were offered during the reporting period, with a combined attendance of 748 participants. The following is a detailed breakdown of program participation:

#### 34 Programs

- 1 Teens
- 11 Adults
- 14 Children 7-12
- 8 Children 0-6

#### 748 Attendees

- 12 Teens
- 136 Adults
- 377 Children 7-12
- 224 Children 0-6

## **8 OTHER BUSINESS**

- a) Volunteer Opportunity  
*Presenter:* Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole shared a QR code for individuals interested in volunteering at upcoming events. The library is currently seeking volunteers for the following:

- Trick-or-Treat on Main
- All Hallows Read
- Harvest Festival

9 ADJOURNMENT

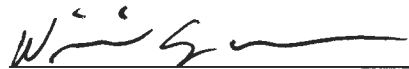
a) Motion to Adjourn

With nothing further Vice Chair Wheeler adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

**Motion To Adjourn**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>CARRIED 8-0</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Lucy Bianchi
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Amanda Gawthorpe
<b>YES:</b>	Eugene Wheeler, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Victoria Privette, Sarah Chera, and Miriam Herrell
<b>NO:</b>	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Julia Curran, Jill King, and Makayla Noel Walden

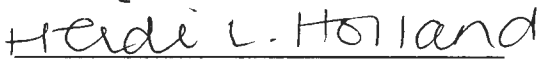
Duly adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026.



Julia Curran  
Board Chair



ATTEST:



Heidi L. Holland, MMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk

